3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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playing at the tasks which her mother performed. She was given a doll, dressed usually in deer skin, which she took everywhere with her. She might be lucky enough to have a toy cradle and carry her doll on her back in the fashion of her mother. As she grew older, she learned to dress and undress her doll and to make for it the necessary articles of clothing. Little girls learned to ride almost by the time they were able to sit astride a horse and hold the reins. Although they never spent as much time as the boys in practice, they became good horsewomen, so proficient that often the white campaigner was unable in the midst of battle to distinguish men from women.

There was a very close relationship between a girl and her mother's sisters. They were not called aunt, but *pia*, "mother," and the relationship was that of a mother to her daughter. A woman called her sister's child her own and aided in its instruction. There was even less formality between a girl and her mother's sister than between the girl and her mother. It was the grandparents who spoiled the child. The maternal grandmother was the girl's favorite. She was called *kaku* and she in reciprocity called her daughter's children *kaku*, too. Their social positions were theoretically equivalent. The *kaku* was likely to be congenial and indulgent with the child, and the relationship was much more intimate than between mother and daughter.[4]

As a girl grew older, she was given small tasks. She was first required to carry water and, when still older, she began to go for wood. Parties of girls, sometimes accompanied by a few women, went out from camp to bring in the wood. They also went with the women to gather wild fruits, roots, and nuts. At about twelve years of age, the girl began to learn to cut out moccasins, to cook, to dress hides, to make and set up a tipi—all the things essential for becoming the wife of a warrior.

The passage of a girl from childhood to young womanhood was an important occasion in her life, and was hardly less so to her family and the tribe. But since there was little anxiety about becoming a woman and a girl was already well-prepared for womanhood, and since the Comanches were a work-a-day, unceremonious people, there were no puberty rites. Among well-to-do families the event was the

[4] For a detailed analysis of Comanche kinship relations and terminology see, Hoebel, "Comanche and Hekandika Shoshone Relationship Systems," *loc. cit.*, 440–57.

881 occasion for ceremonial feasting and celebration, and a daughter who was a favorite child in a well-off family might run over the prairie hanging to the tail of a fast pony so that she would be agile and active. This was the only magical activity associated with puberty. She was then ready to marry and become the mother of children and thus to contribute her part toward adding to the number and, therefore, the [582] strength of the tribe. By the time she was sixteen the chances are her marriage had been consummated.

868 A boy learned to ride almost as soon as he learned to walk. From earliest babyhood he was familiar with horses and their motions, riding behind his mother, clinging to her or to the horse's mane, or strapped to her saddle. He thus gained confidence, learned balance, and, by practice, learned to ride an old gentle pack horse; by the time he was four or five years old, he was expected to be able to manage a pony of his own; and by the time he was six, he was riding young colts bareback. Sometimes while learning to ride, he was bound on the pony by a rawhide lariat while another boy held the pony by another lariat and circled the pony about until the boy literally became a part of the animal. He received the criticisms of companions, father, mother, and other relatives and onlookers. If he fell, he was laughed at by the girls and others, but he did not become angry with his critics. Soon afterwards he had to help herd the ponies. He early became expert in the use of the rope for catching horses and henceforth spent much of his outdoor time on horseback.

603 868 By the time the boy was five or six years of age, he was given a bow and some blunt arrows and taught to shoot, usually by his grandfather. This was natural enough since the father was still engaged in war and hunting, while the older man had probably passed the period of active life and thus had the leisure to make bows and arrows and to devote a good deal of his time to the education of his grandson. Consequently, there developed between the two an intimate relationship whose pattern was one of indulgence and congeniality linked with the less severe forms of authority-obedience. The grandfather taught the grandson to ride, to shoot, to make bows and arrows, and the secrets of the hunt and the trail. He told him stories of his boyhood and early manhood, instructed him in the tribal history and traditions, legends and religion, and many other things

## The Comanches

883 As boys began to approach adolescence, there were a couple of years when they drew away from girls and ceased to play their childish games with them. They ran loose in gangs, racing, hunting, wrestling, and swimming. As their fathers stole stock, they rustled food from the camp. At night they liked to go armed with ropes and cut out riding horses from the herd to joyride on the prairie. If anyone discovered them, all they had to do was to get off and scatter. They were not encouraged by adults in these escapades; neither were they scolded. Their high spirits were tolerated, for that is as a Comanche should be, and marauding youngsters at night were a useful guard against enemy raiders.

593 As the boy grew into adolescence, the normal Comanche pattern demanded extreme brother-sister avoidance, even to the extent of isolating the unmarried adolescent boy in a separate tipi set up behind his parents' lodge. Here he prepared to receive power away from the contaminating grease of cooking utensils, while he was also isolated from incestuous temptation. The brother and sister could never sit close to or touch each other.[7] This social tabu was elaborated to the point where a young man might kill his sister without suffering any social disgrace or punishment if she insisted on violating it.[8]

882 If an older boy became unruly, disrespectful, or insolent, some of the older men made him the subject of cutting sarcasm. It usually was on such an occasion that the youth could not withdraw or save his face. This form of punishment was successful in most cases. Eventually, the youth learned to conduct himself with dignity and in accordance with the social norm set by his elders. Occasionally there was a wrangle between children, but they were allowed to fight it out to the amusement of the onlookers.

● 881 About the time a boy retired to his own tipi, he went out on his first real buffalo hunt, and should success crown his first effort, it might be an occasion for some kind of celebration. Usually a boy learned to hunt buffalo before going on the warpath. When he had shown his ability as a hunter, he was ready and eager to go on the warpath, for most boys wished to be brave and to win war honors.

[7] Informant: See How Deep the Water Is.

[8] Informant: Kills Something. Kill Something's brother-in-law shot his sister for entering his room after he had warned her not to enter.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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But he must first make his medicine or obtain supernatural power through a vision visitation. When the moment came to fight, a boy was given every opportunity to distinguish himself. His first expedition normally occurred about the age of fifteen or sixteen. He told his father or older brother that he wanted to accompany the fighters on a raid. They were pleased, but if they thought he was not ripe and gave him a rebuff, he went sulking to his bed where he lay, head covered with his robe, refusing to eat, until his father said, "All right." His father gave him a good horse to ride only when he went into battle and another to ride while upon the trail. If he proved himself a distinguished warrior, he was likely to become a war leader, and if his success continued, he might be made a war chief by his fellow braves.

After the boy had made a success, the Give Away Dance might be held in his honor, when the father gave out presents, usually one or more horses, in honor of the occasion.[9] The dance was announced several days ahead. At the appointed time the drummers took their position facing east in the center of the circle of spectators. The honoree was certain to dance, and other young men who wished might do so. The father, mother, other relatives, or anyone else who wanted to honor the young brave pitched presents at his feet during the dance or led up horses. Blankets and horses appear to have been the most appropriate gifts. Sticks were used to represent horses. Anyone of either sex who wished could grab the gift, and it belonged to him who first snatched it. A man with power was unlikely to grab. To do so revealed to the spectators that he had lost faith in his power or had given way to greed. No man would ever desire the people to think either of him. Sometimes the host announced the name of a recipient of a gift without giving the others a chance. It was not uncommon for a family to give away until it was poverty stricken. It enhanced social prestige and indicated a belief that the giver had strong power. Consequently, he was more likely to have a stronger following on the next raiding or war party. In 1945, when the veterans returned from World War II, Comanches put on Give Away Dances for their returned heroes, just as they did of old.[10]

[9] Hoebel, *The Political Organization and Law-Ways of the Comanche Indians*, 26–28.

[10] Informant: Kills Something.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma



the stampeding buffalo without stepping into a grass-covered badger or prairie-dog hole. 778 492 224

It was his medicine that enabled him to crawl into a cavalry bivouac and sever the eight-foot rope that each soldier had tied to his wrist, so his horse might graze safely during the night, and without waking the sleeper or his comrades lead the horse away. 778 726

It was his medicine that caused his wives to be friendly and congenial, one with the other. It resulted in the wives' caring for his camp, looking after his surplus horses, and bearing mostly boy babies. For none of these things did he take credit personally. But he was justly proud of his medicine that had brought all these things about, and he guarded it like a jealous lover. 778 [595] [842]

To sum up the attributes of a name-giver: he needed a keen ear and an extensive knowledge of the vocabulary—perhaps a sense of humor helped—and he must have a successful reputation as a warrior-hunter and a willingness to share his medicine. Custom required him to give each individual named a supply of his medicine. Warriors often refused to give a name because it meant parting with a portion of their medicine. They feared the remainder might prove inadequate. Apparently the true name-giver's supply had a similarity to the oil in the cruse and the meal in the barrel of the widow at Zarepath, while she fed the fugitive Elijah. It was replenished as used. 553 778 701 [555]

My reading indicates that the Comanche placed more emphasis or dependence on the name than did any of the other Plains tribes. A warrior might carry a number of names, should he live a long and successful life. In the event a boy developed into a sickly youngster, or was accident-prone, his parents were apt to seek out one reputed to have even stronger medicine than the one who gave him the first name and ask for another name. Directly after puberty when a youth went alone to fast and pray for a vision, should his vision have particular significance, he would be given a name in keeping with the vision. But no Comanche dared name himself. [171] [551] [881] [787]

After his acceptance as a warrior, should he develop outstanding characteristics in methods, strategy, or bravery, he might be given yet another name, descriptive of his accomplishments. For example, there was the Mexican captive Mo-cho-rook, about whom I tell in another chapter. Raised and trained as a Comanche warrior, he was given this name because "he so cruel, he makes Comanche blood run cold." He became a legend while yet he lived. 553 701 551